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Mary and Frank

1489. f. 1879.



MARY AND FRANK;
OR,
A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.



"EARNESTLY AND HEARTILY."

See page 40.

Mary and Frank ;

OR,

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLIND NELLY."

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Mary and Frank;

OR,

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

CHAPTER I.

"Is there a little orphan child,
Father and mother gone,
Who deems himself quite desolate,
Left in the world alone?

It is not so—while Christ's own words
On every lip are laid,
While each a Father has in heaven,
To cheer him, and to aid."

IN a darkened room, where the bright summer sun was making golden lines upon the carpet, by vainly trying to peep through the closed blinds, stood two children—a boy and girl—in the deep embrasure of a window, through which the soft air was wafted in, bearing on it the

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perfume of a thousand flowers, and the pleasant warbling of the birds. You could tell at once that they were brother and sister, by the strong likeness which existed between them ; the same features were traceable in both, though the dark hair of the girl was golden in her little brother. Their faces were very sorrowful, and there were signs of recent tears on their cheeks ; the girl's arm was put fondly round her brother's neck ; as he stood plucking the leaves of a myrtle which stood in the window.

"Frankie, dear, don't cry ;" said his sister, tenderly, as a sob every now and then shook his slender frame ; "God will take care of us, Frankie, darling. Dear Mamma is so happy now," and the girl's own voice trembled as she spoke ; "that we ought not to be sorry, Nurse says, that she is gone ; because she has been ill so long, and now God has taken her where she will never suffer any more. She is with dear Papa, oh, so happy !"

"But, May," answered the little boy, "I cannot help crying, because I shall never see her any more." And then came a fresh burst of tears.

"Yes, Frankie, you will," said his sister, fondly : "I am sure we both shall, if we only

try to be good, and to love God, and to pray to Him. I remember dear Mamma telling me so one night, when I was sitting by her : she told me that we must love nobody like our Saviour, and be always praying to Him to help us to do what is right, and that then, when we die, He will take us to heaven to live with Him for ever. And she told me, oh ! such beautiful things that we shall see there, Frankie !”

“ Tell me about them, May,” said the little boy, looking earnestly into his sister’s face.

“ Well, then, Frankie,” she said, “ sit down by me, and I will see if I can remember.” And she seated herself on a low chair, while Frank threw himself on the floor by her side, and laid his head on her lap. Fondly stroking his fair curls, his sister began—

“ Dear Mamma said, Frankie, that there are gates of pearl, and streets of gold, more beautiful than anything we can see on earth ; and that all those who go there will have white robes put on them, and palms in their hands ; and they will spend all their time in singing, and praising God. There will be so many too, more than anybody can count ; and they will be *quite* happy, and there will be nothing more to grieve them, or make them sorry.”

"I wish God would take me there at once, May: I am so tired of being without dear Mamma," said little Frank, whose eyes had lighted up with a radiant expression, as his sister had told him of the glories surpassing human ken, which are prepared in that world of light and love, for those who love and serve God.

"Sing me that hymn, May, dear, will you please, that Mamma liked so much, about the children in heaven?" said the little boy, after a pause.

Mary's voice trembled a little, but she bravely conquered the disposition to cry, and readily complied with his request. Fixing her eyes on a picture which hung on the opposite side of the room, that of a lady with a calm, sweet expression of countenance, evidently the likeness of her mother, whose gentle eyes seemed to look down lovingly on her little daughter,—Mary sang:—

"Around the throne of God in heaven,
Thousands of children stand,
Children, whose sins are all forgiven,
A holy, happy band.

"What brought them to that world above,
That heaven so bright and fair,
Where all is peace and joy and love?
How came those children there?

"Because the Saviour shed His blood
To wash away their sin ;
Bathed in that pure and precious flood,
Behold them white and clean.

"On earth they sought their Saviour's grace,
On earth they loved His name ;
So now they see His blessed face,
And stand before the Lamb."

When the hymn was finished, Mary looked down at her little brother ; Frank was asleep !

Mary and Frank Barton were orphans ; one short year had deprived them of both parents. Their father had been killed by a railway accident some nine months before ; and the blow had fallen so heavily and suddenly upon their mother, who at the time was in delicate health, that she had never rallied from the shock, and gradually she faded away like a stricken flower. She had, at the time of which we speak, been dead about five days, and the following was to see her laid in her last home. Mary and Frank were the only two children, and now they were alone in the world. Their uncle, their father's only brother, had come to Oaklands just before his sister-in-law died, and since announced his intention of taking his orphan nephew and

niece away with him, after the funeral, to his home in the south of England, to live with him, and to be educated with his own children. So their pleasant home was to be left, with all its tender associations, the green fields where they had played from babyhood, the garden in which they had spent so many happy hours by the side of their dear mother's invalid chair, while she was wheeled about to take the air for the last few months of her life ; their nursery, and the dear old nurse, who had tenderly watched and guarded them from infancy. It made the children very sorrowful.

Their uncle was a kind man, and he promised his little nephew and niece that he would make them happy in their new home, and that their aunt and cousins would be very fond of them ; but still their poor little hearts were heavy, they were so lonely. No fond mother had they now to comfort them, no father's love to protect them. Little Frank was six years of age, and Mary some five years older. Many had been the conversations which her mother had held with her little girl, entreating the child, who was old beyond her years, to watch well over her brother, when she should be gone. " Take care, May, dear," she would say, " that

he is never unkindly treated : he is a delicate little fellow, and children who are older than he is, may take advantage of this, and perhaps try to lead him to do wrong. But I shall leave you, May, as a kind of mother to him ; you must never let him forget me, or the lessons I have taught him about his Father in Heaven ; never let him forget that He is watching over him, and that He can see everything he does. Take care of him, May ; I leave little Frank in your hands."

It was a solemn charge for so young a child, but Mary knew well what it meant ; and since the morning when the nurse came to the side of her little bed, to awaken her, and with tears in her eyes, in answer to her enquiries, told her that her dear Mamma was in heaven, Mary was unusually tender and gentle to her little orphan brother ; she controlled her own passionate burst of grief to soothe him ; and, in the course of the day, when they were allowed to go into the chamber of death, to see the earthly remains of their fond parent, and little Frank shrunk back frightened from kissing the pale cheek, whispering, as he clung to his sister, "How cold Mamma is, May"! the latter answered in a subdued tone, "Mamma is in heaven, Frankie,

up in heaven with God and the holy angels ; it is only her body which is left here."

"Then we have no mother, May," said Frank, as they left the room, scarcely understanding what she had said.

"Not *here*, dear Frankie," she answered.

"And nobody to take care of us?" asked the little boy, looking up wistfully and tearfully into his sister's face.

"Yes, Frankie. God will take care of us ; He is watching over us now, and He always will do so." And the child went on to tell him all she knew of the care their heavenly Father took of them, how He loved them, far better than even their own dear lost mother could. With words such as these Mary soothed her brother ; and tried, even thus early, to fulfil her parent's dying wishes.

Then came the day of the funeral—a bright, beautiful summer's day, when all the earth was bathed in the golden rays of the glorious July sun, and no cloud marred the peaceful beauty of the scene. A number of people were assembled at the church-yard gate to meet the little band of mourners, who were to be seen slowly winding their way along the shady lane which led to the Church. On, and on came the sad

procession; each holding a hand of their uncle's walked Mary and Frank, pale, but shedding no tears, as if the remembrance of their mother's happiness outweighed their grief at her loss. They stood at the grave, and heard the beautiful service read, and saw her body consigned to the dust, to sleep there until the Resurrection morning. When all was over, and the assembled group had dispersed, the children took one last look at the grave, and then their uncle led them away. Little Frank's tears now flowed freely, and his uncle did not attempt to stop them. The child had been unnaturally composed during the day, the strangeness and sadness of the position, which he was too young as yet fully to understand, had bewildered him; and this burst of grief relieved his over-excited feelings.

When they reached home again, Mr. Barton bade them follow him into the drawing-room; and then, taking one on each knee, he talked to them kindly and tenderly, of the new home to which, in a few days, they were going, and of all they would see there. They knew very little of their cousins, indeed had only seen them once, for Eastham was so far distant from Oaklands, as to render meetings between the

two families of very rare occurrence. So all they heard was quite strange to them; and, child like, Frank's tears were ere long dried, and he was listening earnestly to the account his uncle was giving him of the pony—"something even like his own pony which he would leave behind,"—and of his cousin Robert's large dog, which could swim in the pond, and do many wonderful things.

"Mary," said the little boy, a short time after, when they were together in the nursery, "I almost think I shall be glad to go to Eastham, after what uncle has been telling us; shan't you?"

"Well, Frankie;" answered his sister smiling—but it was only a sorrowful smile, for Mary was older, and knew well the sorrow she should feel in leaving all she had cared for, the old familiar faces of the servants, and in going entirely among strangers,—“Well, Frankie, I do not think I shall be *glad* to go; but I shall try not to be very sorry, for it would not be right when uncle is so kind, and, besides, dear Mamma would not have liked it.”

"But, May, only think of the great dog, cousin Rob's dog, Lion, uncle said he was called!" and Frank's eyes glistened. "Nurse," he added, run-

ning up to his nurse, who at that minute entered the room ; “ Nurse, only fancy, uncle has been telling us such beautiful things that we shall see at Eastham, and May says she is not glad to go ! ”

“ No ; Master Frank, I dare say she isn't ; ” said nurse, smoothing the curly head which was uplifted to her. “ Miss May is older than you are,” she added, looking fondly at the little girl who now came towards her, and threw herself on her knees by her side.

“ Shan't *you* like to go, Nursie ? ” asked the little boy, presently.

“ I am not going with you, Master Frank,” answered the nurse after a short pause, in a trembling voice.

“ Not going with us ! what do you mean, nurse ? Dear Nursie, I *cannot* go without you ; uncle would not wish it ; ” cried Frank, vehemently.

“ Hush, hush ! ” said the nurse, laying her hand on his shoulder ; “ my dear little boy must not be wilful, and make his old nurse unhappy.”

“ No, no ; but I cannot go without you, Nursie : I see what May meant now.” And the poor little boy's sobs came fast, and passionately.

May, too, had been crying in silence ; but on seeing the distress of her brother, the remembrance of her dead mother's words seemed to flash suddenly upon her mind, for she roused herself, and, winding her arm round Frank's neck, she whispered, "Don't cry, darling ; I will try and take care of you, Frankie, like nurse used."

"But why cannot uncle take you, too, Nursie, as well as us ? I am sure he would if I asked him," said the boy, presently.

"No, dear ; your uncle is very kind, but he wouldn't be able to do that. If you will listen to me quietly, and try and stop crying, I will tell you *why* he cannot. You know your cousins have a nurse, who has lived with them all their lives, as I have lived with you. If I went there she would have to be sent away ; and do you think your cousins would like that any better than you like my leaving you, Master Frank ? They would think it quite as hard, and be just as sorry as you are now. So is it not better to give up what you like for other people ?" asked the nurse, with tears in her eyes which she could not restrain, as she looked down on her little charge.

"It is so hard though, Nurse : " said Frank,

presently: "Papa gone, and Mamma gone, and then to lose you too!"

"Not hard, Frankie dear:" answered his sister, "If it is God's will: dear Mamma used to say God's will was never hard; because He loved us so much, that He could never do anything to hurt us."

In conversation like this the afternoon passed away; but Frank did not seem as if he could be comforted at the thought of parting with his faithful nurse. At tea-time, his quick renewed sobs went to his little sister's heart: she was lonely herself, poor child, and she needed some one to comfort her; but her own grief was restrained for Frank's sake, as she tried to talk cheerfully to him, and to lead him to think of the promised wonders of Eastham.

Later in the evening, when the sun had sunk to rest behind the purple and crimson clouds, and the grey twilight was slowly creeping over the earth, a timid knock was heard at the drawing-room door, where Mr. Barton was sitting, weary, and saddened by the events of the day. "Come in!" he said: and a little figure stood before him in the dusk.

"Why, May, is it you?" he asked; "what brings you down here so late, my child?"

"I only came to ask you something, uncle Edward:" said Mary, timidly.

"Well, come and sit down on my knee, and tell me what it is, little one," said Mr. Barton.

Mary did as she was told; but the words which she was going to say would not at first come to her lips, and the tears coursed slowly down her cheeks.

"What, crying, Mary? nay; but you must try to be a brave little woman, and not give way now. Think, you are older than Frank; so you must endeavour to see what a good example you can set him. And now, what is it you wanted to say to me, dear?"

With a strong effort the child subdued the rising sobs, and in rather a trembling voice said, "It was about poor Frankie, uncle Edward: he is so unhappy because nurse has been telling him that she is not going with us to Eastham. I know she cannot stay there always; but would you mind taking her with us just for a little while, uncle, till Frankie is used to everything? and then it would not seem quite so hard to him, perhaps, to say good-bye to her." And Mary looked up anxiously into her uncle's face.

Mr. Barton paused, as if in thought, for a

moment or two, and then said : " My little girl, you are old enough to be able to understand what I am going to say to you, so listen to me attentively while I give you my reason for not taking Spencer with us. Your cousins' nurse has lived with them ever since they were born; and I am quite sure she will be just as kind to you and Frank, as she is to them : but I think she would like to have the charge of you both from the first of your going to Eastham. It will give her more to do to have two more children in the nursery ; but that I am sure she will not mind, if you are put entirely under her care from the first. And now, does Mary see what I mean ?" added Mr. Barton, patting his little niece's cheek. " Hard as it may seem, my child, I cannot take Spencer with us."

" It was not for myself, uncle, that I asked you ; it was only for Frankie," said Mary in reply. " I was afraid he would be so unhappy."

" You must try all you can to make him happy, May, and I am sure your cousins will do the same. I dare say it will not be long before he likes West almost as well as Spencer."

Mary thought this would never be the case with her : but she did not say so. The thought of the responsibility which rested upon her,

almost weighed her down ; but Mary knew where to seek for strength to help her to bear it. Though she was but eleven years old, she knew full well Who alone could enable her to do what was right, and to guard her little orphan brother tenderly and well. Her mother's careful teaching had not been lost upon the little girl ; and the lessons of dependence upon God, and faith in Him, so early inculcated, were now yielding full fruit. That night, after the conversation to which we have alluded between her uncle and herself, when she had bidden him good night, she went up to the nursery, now almost dark, and quite deserted, for Frank lay quietly sleeping in his little bed in the adjoining room, and the nurse was down stairs ; and, throwing herself on her knees by the window seat, Mary wept out all her sorrow, and all her distress at the feet of that Saviour whom she had been so early taught to love ; and asked Him to help her in the difficult path which lay before her, and to guide her steps aright.



CHAPTER II.

"I'm but a stranger here ;
Heaven is my home :
Earth is a desert drear ;
Heaven is my home.
Danger and sorrow stand
Round me on every hand :
Heaven is my father-land,
Heaven is my home."

THREE weeks passed away, and found the children still at Oaklands. Mr. Barton had found so much to arrange that he had been unable to leave before ; and this was the day appointed for their departure. They were to leave about noon ; and it was now ten o'clock. Mary and Frank had been wandering together over the garden, and gathering some of their favorite flowers to carry away with them. When they reached the shrubbery gate, Mary paused ; " Frankie, wait a minute," she said, as he was bounding onward : " there is one place where I should like to go, if you will come with me. Do you know where I mean ? "

“To Mamma’s grave ;” answered Frank, in a hushed voice.

Mary nodded her head : she could not speak. They opened the gate, and closed it quietly after them ; and walked along the lane leading to the churchyard. Frank spoke very little, and Mary not at all, as they walked along ; for her heart was full, too full for words. A turn in the lane brought them within sight of the little church ; and then, under the shadow of it, as they approached, was the grave,—their father’s grave, and to his name, since they had last been there, had been added another, that of their mother. Underneath, at their uncle’s request, had been engraved the words, “I am the Resurrection and the Life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.”

The children read the words as they stood looking down on the stone ; and in the heart of the elder of the two, though as yet she but dimly understood them, they awakened hopes and thoughts of the glorious future which awaited them, if they would be faithful followers of the Saviour, whose words they were. They knelt down by the grave, and then Mary prayed, a

simple little prayer which her mother had taught her, that God would lead them aright, and keep their feet from falling, in all the temptations to which they might be exposed ; that He would give them His Holy Spirit, to put good thoughts into their hearts, and to love Him above all ; and that, when they died, He would take them to be with Him for ever in the home He had prepared for them in heaven. Then they rose from their knees, and Mary plucked two daisies from the sod close by, and put them into a little pocket-book which had been her Mamma's last birthday present to her. The large tears were in her eyes as she took Frank's hand, and turned to go, and a look of passionate yearning for the mother's love, whose body lay hidden there. But their time was getting short, she could tell by the chimes of the clock, and so she hurried Frank away.

When they reached the house, the carriage stood ready packed at the door. Then came the last tearful goodbyes with the old servants, and above all with nurse who held first Frank and then Mary in a close embrace, when, with a fervent " God bless you, dears," she let them go. They were placed in the carriage ; it drove off, and they were whirled away. Mary strained

her eyes to catch the last view of the house, of their own little gardens, and lastly of the churchyard. Her face was very pale, for her poor little heart was full ; and yet, for Frank's sake, she would not give way. *His* grief had almost wept itself out ; and by the time the train left the station he was eagerly looking out of the window, and noticing everything. Past trees and hedges, fields ripening for harvest with their golden grain, past houses and streams, were they whirled along.

But it was quite evening time before they reached Eastham station ; and Frank's eyes were getting heavy with sleep after his day of unwonted excitement. When the train stopped it was almost dark, so dark that the children could not see anything as they were placed in the carriage which was waiting for them, and driven off.

"We shall not be long now, Frankie," said Mr. Barton, cheerfully, "before we get home ; it is not many minutes' drive."

"Home"! The words sounded drearily in Mary's ears : no place could be home to her, but Oaklands, she thought. Presently the carriage stopped.

"Here we are at last"! said her uncle ; and,

as he spoke, the front door opened, and a blaze of light was shewn. "Jump out, children," continued he; and he lifted Mary and Frank to the ground, and took them into the hall, where they received a kind kiss on their foreheads, from a lady whom, at first, from their eyes being dazzled by the light, they could not see.

"Welcome to Eastham, dear children," said Mrs. Barton, kindly, leading them into a room opening out of the hall. "I am your aunt, Frankie," she said, seating herself on a sofa, and drawing Frank to her. "You will not be able to see any of your cousins to-night, for it is so late that they are all asleep; but they were so anxious to see you, and were watching for you till the last moment before they went to bed."

"I think these poor little travellers will be glad to go there too, as soon as they have had some tea," said her husband, entering at that moment, and catching the last word. "I know somebody who looks very sleepy already;" and Mr. Barton looked at Frank, and smiled.

"Mary looks very tired too," said their aunt, stroking Mary's head, as she rose to ring the bell for the nurse to come and take them to the nursery.

Frank's eyes were too heavy with sleep for him to notice anything that night : but Mary's heart yearned for Spencer's kiss, as her new nurse tucked her up in her little bed, and left the room with the light. Her pillow was very wet that night ere she slept : she felt so lonely, though she had met with such a kind welcome from her uncle and aunt ; but there was a void in her heart which could not be filled ; a longing for her mother's touch, and her mother's voice of love, which alas ! poor child, she would never feel, nor hear again in this world.

The morning dawned bright and lovely. The sun was pouring a flood of light into the room, when Mary awoke : at first she could not remember where she was. Nor could Frank either, as he sat up in his bed about half-an-hour afterwards, rubbing his eyes, and gazing wonderingly on all around him. Just then his sister entered with the nurse.

" Oh ! May ; I could not think where I was when I first awoke," exclaimed the little boy, as the former kissed him. " It all seemed so strange ; I was just going to call you, when you came in."

Frank, as he said this, looked up rather frightened at the nurse, a tall, large person,

with no pleasant smile brightening her face ; and he thought sadly she was very unlike his own dear Spencer.

“ When am I to see my cousins ? ” asked he, presently.

“ As soon as you are up, Master Frank : ” said West, not at all unkindly ; “ they are already up and dressed : but I let you sleep longer this morning, as you must have been very tired with your long journey yesterday.”

Frank rather dreaded seeing his cousins ; for, having been brought up in a very secluded manner, with no companion of his own age, but his sister Mary, he was a very shy child : and, it was only by the latter promising to come and fetch him when he was dressed, that he restrained the tears which were ready to flow. But, with Mary's hand in his, the little boy felt himself safe. When they entered the nursery, their cousins were all waiting for the breakfast bell to ring. Anna, the eldest, a nice-looking girl of ten, came forward and kissed Mary, and then Frank, saying, rather shyly though, that she was very pleased to see them,—while her sister Kate, the second one, whose bright, intelligent eyes wandered over her cousins, seemed more intent on finding out what they

were like, than in giving them a welcome. As for Robert, the owner of the famous dog Lion, which we already know by repute, he was a year older than Frank, though he looked even more, being very much taller, and more boyish looking—there was no shyness mingled with his greeting. He was sitting at the table with a book, evidently a lesson-book, before him, which he did not appear to be studying very intently, for he was watching his younger sister little Maude, a pretty fair child of four, building a house of bricks on the floor.

“ Oh ! here you are at last ! ” he exclaimed, boisterously, as his cousins entered, followed by West ; at the same time throwing the book over to the other side of the room, thereby knocking down Maude’s nearly-finished house, and making her cry. “ No more lessons for me to-day. Papa must give me a holiday, the first day of your coming, though Mamma did make me learn my lessons ready for him,” he added.

“ For shame, Rob ! ” said his eldest sister, reproachfully. “ How can you do so ? ” for she noticed that Frank looked quite frightened with this noisy greeting ; “ and you have made Maude cry too ! ”

"I am quite ashamed of you, Master Robert," said the nurse, taking Maude on her knee and soothing her. "I don't know what your cousins will think of you. I should think you have had holiday enough to last for a long time. You've done no lessons at all, ever since your Papa has been away; and the sooner you begin them again the better, I think, for then you'll be less trouble in the nursery."

"Come now, West, don't be cross," said Robert, laughing. "Do you like lessons, Frank?" he added, turning to his cousin, who stood by, with his wide-opened eyes expressive of astonishment at Robert's boldness. "You can't think how *I* hate them; they are such a bother. Papa says I am to go to school next year; I am sure, when I do go, I will do no lessons when I can help it."

"But you will be obliged, when you get there," retorted Kate, in not a very sisterly tone; "or else you will get punished every day, and that you won't like."

"Oh, I don't care for that!" said Robert, with a laugh.

"Who was that who said they did 'not care' for something?" said Mrs. Barton, opening the door at that minute; "I never like to hear that

said. "Don't let me hear it again." The children were all silent, for their Mamma looked grave. "And now, dears," she continued, turning to Mary and Frank, and kissing them ; "how are you this morning ? and how did you sleep in your strange beds ?"

They told her that they were very well ; but Mary added, for she was spokes-woman, that when they first awoke, they did not know where they were. Then came the morning greetings between the mother and her own children : seeing the traces of recent tears on Maude's cheeks, Mrs. Barton enquired what had caused them.

"Master Robert threw his lesson-book down, and knocked over her house which she was building," said West.

A gentle reproof for rudeness was administered to the transgressor, which did not seem though to have much effect upon him, for, as all the children, with the exception of Maude, followed Mrs. Barton down stairs to the breakfast room, Robert was found pinching his sister Kate's elbow, and asking her, in a loud whisper, if she did not think Maude was "a great goose."

Family prayers followed, and they made Mary very sad and sorrowful ; she felt herself lonely

among so many strangers ; but, the first words of the Lord's Prayer brought peace to her heart ; the "Our Father" told her, that though she had no earthly parent, there was One in heaven ever watching His children, who would never neglect, or forsake them.

At breakfast, Mr. Barton, in answer to Robert's request for a whole holiday, said that he could not give him that, he had had quite as many holidays already as were good for him—at which Robert made a grimace to Kate, which nearly made her laugh—but that, in consideration of it being their cousins' first day at Eastham, he should only do lessons for an hour ; and then they should go out together and show them the garden, and the fields, and all that was to be seen. When breakfast was over, he told Robert to come to his study at ten o'clock, and bring Frank with him ; and Mrs. Barton said she should take the three girls for the same time, and then they might have the rest of the day to themselves. As you may gather from this, Mr. Barton had been in the habit of teaching his little boy, and intended to continue doing so, until he should be of an age to go to school ; and his wife, in the same way, was educating her daughters, for at present they had no governess at home.

But to return to our young party at the breakfast-table. Frank looked ready to cry at having to leave his sister ; but Mary found time to whisper to him, " Don't be afraid of uncle, Frankie ; you know he is so kind ; and I shall be with you when we go out."

But the little boy felt very shy indeed ; particularly when, as they were on their way to the study, Robert said, " Do you know Latin, Frank ? Papa is teaching me."

" No ;" answered his cousin, timidly.

" What a baby !" exclaimed the other ; but he had not time to say more just then, as they had reached the study door.

The children all thought the hour passed very slowly that morning ; and, by eleven o'clock, they were quite ready for the promised ramble before dinner. First, they went to see Lion, a beautiful Newfoundland dog, who, when Robert unchained him, bounded about so much, and seemed so rejoiced at his liberty, that he made Frank feel rather frightened ; but Mary squeezed his hand, as if to re-assure him that the dog would not hurt him. Then they went to the stables to look at the pony ; and, after that, their gardens had to be visited. Anna showed Mary two pieces, side by side with

her's, and Kate's, and Robert's, which had been set apart for her and Frank. The gardens were at the end of the shrubbery walk; and, being situated on the brow of a hill, the view from thence over the wide expanse of country was very beautiful. Mary could not help saying so, as, emerging from the shady walk, it burst suddenly upon her. "That is not half as pretty," said Kate, in answer to her exclamation, "as the view from Mamma's flower garden, all over the village, and for many miles beyond. But don't stand looking at that, Mary; come, and see our gardens; don't we keep them tidy?"

Here Anna interrupted them, by telling Mary that she had some packets of seeds to give her, and by promising that she would lend her a spade, or rake, or anything she might want.

"I have my own, thank you very much though, cousin Anna. I used to use them in my own garden at home, and I brought them here with me," returned Mary.

"Oh, tell us about your home, do, Mary!" exclaimed Kate, who was close behind them, tying up some sweet peas, which the rain had bent down.

"I can't just yet, Kate," replied Mary, the

tears coming fast into her eyes, as the remembrance of Oaklands rushed upon her mind.

"No, you shouldn't have asked her, Kate," said Anna reprovingly. "Never mind, Mary, dear. It must have been very sad for you to leave your nice home : I don't know what I should do, if I were obliged."

Anna's kind tone and words quite overcame her cousin, and the pent-up tears flowed forth. "That was not the worst, though, Anna," she said in a low tone, as soon as she could speak.

"Oh, I know what you mean;" returned the other, gently ; "losing your Mamma—that was the worst. But don't cry, Mary, dear: Mamma told me Aunt was so good, and so ready to die, that it only made her a great deal happier, than if she had lived—Mamma cried very much when she told me ; I think it reminded her of a little brother we had, who died before I was born," said Anna, lowering her voice.

"Anna, you know we have been told never to speak of that," cried Kate, interrupting her.

"Not to Mamma, Kate, I know ; for fear of grieving her," returned her sister ; "but it does not matter saying it to cousin Mary."

Kate's only reply was a toss of her head, and Anna whispered to Mary, that she (Kate)

always thought she knew better than other people."

Now, Mary's lonely little heart had warmed towards her eldest cousin, from the sympathy which she had expressed for her ; and it grieved the little girl, who, hitherto, in her own peaceful home, had seen no dissension, and heard no jarring words, to notice, as she could not help doing, even in the short space of time which she had spent with them, how ready Kate was to interfere in what did not concern her ; and how, instead of taking it quietly and patiently, Anna always answered in a pettish tone.

Just then, Robert came running up to them through the shrubbery. "Only think," he cried, pushing open the gate, and letting it shut again violently ; " Frank is such a baby as to cry for his sister ; *I* wouldn't be so silly."

Mary's face became very pale, and an indignant look came into her eyes, as if she were going to make some angry answer ; but an attentive observer might have noticed, by her tightly compressed lips, that she had conquered the momentary temptation to do so.

"Where is he, Robert ?" she asked, in a minute, interrupting an exclamation from Anna, of, "I wonder you are not ashamed of your-

self, Rob! what have you done to make him cry?"

"Oh, he is down there," returned Robert, pointing down the walk, in answer to his cousin's question; "sitting under a tree."

Mary, without making any further remark, pursued her way alone, till she came to the spot that Robert had indicated, and there, true enough, she found Frank. He had thrown himself on the ground at the foot of an old tree, and was sobbing as if his heart would break—he did not hear his sister's steps, and she was by his side, before he knew it.

"Frankie, darling," she said, fondly, sitting down by his side, "What is the matter; what makes you cry so?"

"Oh, May, I am so unhappy; do take me away; I can't stay here," said the boy, between his sobs.

"I cannot take you away, Frankie, dear; but only tell me what makes you cry; did Robert hurt you?"

"He told me I was silly, because I was frightened at Lion when he jumped on me; and then, when I said I wanted you, he laughed, and ran away, and left me," said Frank.

"But I told you Lion would not hurt you,

dear," said his sister, soothingly ; " You must try and be a brave boy, and not be afraid of him."

" I am *not* afraid of him, May, when you are with me," answered Frank, faintly.

" But, dear brother," said the little girl, " you know I cannot always be with you ; and, if cousin Rob sees you are a brave boy, he will not tease you ; do you understand what I mean ?"

" Yes ; but, May, do take me away, I shall never be happy here."

" Oh, yes, you will, my darling," said Mary, gently. " Dear Mamma," and Mary's voice trembled, " used to say, Frankie, that we should be happy anywhere, if we only tried to do what was right, and to please God. And you know it was His will that our dear Mamma died, and that we were sent here ; and He would not like to see us fretful about it ; do you think He would ?"

" No," said Frank, though in a half-doubting voice.

" And besides," continued his sister, " it makes me so unhappy to see you cry ; so you will try to be a brave boy ; won't you, Frankie ?"

" Yes, yes ! May, indeed I will !" returned

Frank, getting up, and throwing his arms round his sister's neck.

"Well, then, dry your eyes, dear ; here are the others coming to find us," said Mary, as she caught the sound of approaching footsteps and voices. Robert soon came in sight, with Lion by his side, followed by Anna and Kate. "We have heard the first dinner-bell," cried he, as he came near his cousins ; "so we must make haste home. Well, Frank, are you happier now you have got your sister ? Make him pat your head, Lion, good old dog," he added, with a laugh.

Mary gave Frank a warning look, and the little boy answered in a tone which he tried to make very brave and fearless, "Oh, yes ; let me pat him, cousin Robert, I am not afraid of him now."

The latter looked as if he doubted it, for Frank's hand trembled as he stroked the dog's back ; and he soon withdrew it, and went to his sister's side. But, notwithstanding this, Frank had gained a victory over himself. Even if it was not a very perfect one as yet, it was *something*, for it was one step gained ; and Frank felt himself the happier for making the effort.

After dinner the children went for a long ramble in the fields and the neighbouring wood, accompanied by West, and little Maude; and very much they all enjoyed it. Frank still further overcame his shyness, and ran about with Robert and Lion most contentedly. Not that he escaped all teasing from his cousin, nor did he, on his side, always take it quite as bravely as he should have done; but Mary was at hand to help him, and she was pleased to see that he was really trying to do as she had told him.

So passed the children's first day at Eastham. It had been a very long one to the little newcomers; even to children the first day in a strange place does seem long. There is so much to be seen, so much to talk about, that the hours appear to pass far more slowly than usual. When night came, they were both wearied in mind, as well as in body, and fell fast asleep as soon as they were in their little beds.



CHAPTER III.

"I want to be like Jesus,
Meek, loving, lowly, mild ;
I long to be like Jesus,
The Father's holy child.
I long to be with Jesus,
Amid the heavenly throng,
To sing with saints His praises,
To learn the angels' song."

My little readers must have discovered ere this, as Mary did on the first day of her residence at Eastham, that both Anna, Kate, and Robert Barton, were very far from being without faults. We know indeed that there is no one living in the world who is perfect ;—there was but One in whom "was no sin," the One who died to save us from the curse of sin—the sinless Son of God. But, there are some people, and some children too, who, by constant striving, have, with the help of God's grace, been enabled in a great measure to overcome the evil inclinations, and bad habits and passions, incident to our sinful natures.

Now, I do not say that little Mary Barton had overcome all her natural failings, very far from it; but she had been brought up in the calm atmosphere of such a peaceful, happy home; she had been so carefully trained, and instructed in all the truths of our holy religion, so fondly nurtured in the love and fear of God, that she had grown up with a dread of offending Him, with such a love for Him, as to lead her to strive constantly to please Him, to fight against all naughty tempers, and angry, unkind, or hasty words. And so it grieved her to perceive, as she could not avoid doing, that quarrelling was of no rare occurrence between her cousins.

She began to be afraid, as weeks passed on, that it might have a bad effect upon Frank; for, as he overcame his first shyness and fear of Robert, he would often resent his teasing, and give back an angry word in return. Robert was not naturally an illnatured boy, but he was of a proud, domineering temper. He domineered over Anna, and his little sister Maude; but Kate's spirit was as bold an one as his own, and as she was too fond of interfering in other people's business, the quarrels between them were, alas! very frequent.

Frank's wonder was at first excited by these

disputes, and they made him very unhappy ; but this feeling, I am sorry to say, in time wore off. For the first few weeks after their arrival at Eastham, whenever angry words and looks passed between the brother and sister, Frank would shrink back frightened, to take hold of Mary's hand, as if seeking her protection. But Robert scornfully laughed at him for this. "What a baby !" he would exclaim, for this was Rob's favorite expression. "Did he think he could not do without his sister !" And at last the little boy would not only stand by unmoved, but would occasionally join in the disputes ; and, when Robert directed the teasing towards himself, would often reply in a pettish tone.

All this made Mary very unhappy. Her indignation was first aroused by Robert teasing one who was younger than himself ; and then, great was her sorrow to note, the dawning of angry passions in her brother. It is true, Mary was only eleven, a mere child in years ; but, in mind she was considerably older.

This arose partly from her having been the chosen, nay, almost the only companion of her mother, during the long months of her widowhood ; and, beyond her brother, Mary had

never had any play-fellow of her own age. This constant, and almost exclusive association with those older than herself, had raised the tone of the child's mind. She was able to think more deeply, and to reason better, than, for her age, would have been thought probable. In addition to this, she was naturally grave and quiet; and the six months converse with her dying mother, for Mrs. Barton had never attempted to conceal the fact that she *was* dying, from herself, or from her daughter, had only served to enhance this natural tendency. It was with no light feeling then that Mary noticed these signs in Frank's conduct. At first she knew not what to do: her aunt was kind; but, Mary felt as if she could not tell her; to do so, would have involved a complaint of Robert, and that she knew very well, would not have been acceptable to his mother. The same feeling withheld her from speaking to her uncle; for Rob was the spoiled darling of both parents. What should she do? The thought perplexed her much; for her Mamma's words were fresh in her recollection, "Take care, May, that he is never unkindly treated. Children who are older than he, may try to lead him to do wrong; but I leave you as a kind of

mother to him." Mary could seem to hear the tones of her earnest voice, and to feel the touch of her thin hands, as in that still evening hour, when, sitting by her sofa, she had spoken these words ; and Mary hid her face, and wept, as the remembrance stole over her mind. What should she do ? how should she, who so often did wrong herself, lead Frankie to do what was right ? Again, and again, she asked herself the question. "All I can do is, to pray to God to help me to keep Frankie from getting harm," thought she ; and she did pray. Earnestly, and heartily, kneeling by her little bed, she besought God for the promised strength and guidance, which, she had been taught to believe, He never failed to give to those who asked them.

One day there had been an unusually stormy quarrel between Kate and Robert in the garden, over the disputed ownership of a piece of mignonette, which grew just on the border of their two gardens ; Robert declaring it was his, and Kate, that it belonged to her. In the evening Mary took the opportunity of speaking to Frank. From the first of their coming to Eastham, she had made it a special request to her aunt, that he might always be allowed to

say his prayers with her; and to this Mrs. Barton had readily acceded.

On the evening of which I am speaking they went, as usual, into the little room which Anna and Mary shared together; and then Frank knelt down at his sister's knee, and repeated his simple prayer, and then his hymn. When he rose from his knees, she said to him: "Frankie, I am going to ask you something. I wish, when cousin Robert teases you, that you would try not to take any notice of it."

"Why, May!" said the little boy, looking at her in surprise; "What have I said to him to-day? I do not think he has teased me even once."

"I do not mean *to-day*, dear," answered Mary; "only, when I saw Kate and him quarrelling over the mignonette, I could not help being afraid, Frankie, that perhaps you might get as bad."

"No, indeed, sister; I never should. What, quarrel with you!"

"Not with *me*; I did not mean that; but, with *Robert*; because *now*, when he says anything to tease you, you answer him crossly; and, at first, you used not to say anything, so I am afraid it might get worse still."

"But May," replied Frank, "Rob does tease so; he is so tiresome, I really cannot always help saying something."

"I know it is very difficult, Frankie; but don't you think, if you asked God to help you to be quite still and patient, He would?"

"But it all happens in such a minute, May; I get cross sometimes, before I remember anything. Why, yesterday he told me you were a nasty ugly girl, not half so nice as his sisters: I couldn't bear that!"

"It was not worth while though being vexed about," said Mary, smiling at her brother's eagerness. "But there is another thing, dear Frankie," she continued, in an altered voice; "if dear Mamma could look down from heaven and see us, do you think she would like to see you quarrelling?"

Frank's eyes filled directly. "No, May," said he, hiding his face on her shoulder; "I will try not to mind what he says: I will ask God to help me to be good tempered."

"If you do not say anything to him, Frankie, I think Rob will very likely leave off teasing you," said Mary, after a long pause.

"Well, May, I have promised you, and I will keep my promise," said the little boy,

drawing up his slight figure, as if his resolution were made, and he intended at any cost to adhere to it. "I will keep my promise. I'll bite my lips, or pinch my fingers, or do anything to keep down the cross words."

"That will not make you do it, Frankie," said Mary, smiling. "There is only one way in which you will be able to do right: You know what I mean?"

"Yes; by asking God to help me. But, May, do tell me, have *you* never felt inclined to be cross with Rob?" asked Frank, looking enquiringly into his sister's face.

"Yes, dear, very often, I am sorry to say; but then God has helped me to remember what I have told you; and I have been able to fight against the angry feeling."

"Oh! how glad I shall be when he goes to school, May; he says he is to go next year!" exclaimed Frank.

"Master Frank," said West, opening the door at that minute; "how much longer do you mean to keep me? I have been waiting to undress you for a long while."

"Wait one minute more, West, please. Good night, dear May; give me another nice kiss, dear sister," said the little boy, flinging

his arms round his sister's neck. "I won't forget my promise," he whispered, as they left the room together.

Frank remembered his promise as soon as he awoke the following morning ; but he found it harder to keep than he had imagined. The children were all expected to be in the nursery an hour before breakfast every morning, to learn their lessons ; for very soon after breakfast their studies began, and lasted till one o'clock, when they were all at liberty for the rest of the day. On this particular morning, Frank entered the nursery, his bright face full of determination, and with his resolution very fresh in his mind. He had asked God, in his morning prayer, to "help him to overcome all naughty tempers, and to be very patient under teasing, for Jesus Christ's sake ;" and he had risen from his knees very happy, thinking how easy it would be to be good. He was dressed first, and, therefore, he was intent on his book when Robert entered the room. It happened to be rather a hard lesson, and Frank found it very difficult to learn ; especially as Robert kept asking him questions bearing not the slightest relation to it.

"Oh ! Rob ; if you would but be quiet,

please," said the little boy, looking up at last, after making another vain attempt to shut out the sound of Robert's voice.

"Who is to care, I wonder, whether you know it or not," was the answer.

"Why uncle was vexed with me yesterday, because I couldn't say my lessons properly : and indeed, Rob, I can't learn it while you talk to me," said Frank, rather pettishly.

"Leave it alone then, if you like!" exclaimed Robert, rudely.

Frank's eyes filled with tears, and a sullen cloud came over his face ; but, as he looked up, he caught Mary's eye fixed on him, and its calm, gentle gaze, recalled to his mind the resolution he had well-nigh forgotten. He bent his head a minute, saying inwardly, "Lord Jesus help me to be a good little boy ;" and, when he raised it again, he could smile at his sister, as if to reassure her. But Robert's teasing was by no means ended : he appeared to be in a very fidgetty humour that morning, for he did not sit still for many minutes together. First he jumped up in the window-seat, straining his eyes to look out in the yard. "Why, there is Edwards unchaining Lion ; what business has he to do that, I wonder?" cried he, indignantly.

“ And what businsss have you to behave so, Rob, I should like to know ?” retorted Kate, who, as usual, must put in a word.

“ Hold your tongue !” was the answer she received.

“ Oh ! Robert !” exclaimed his two sisters together ; “ Papa would be so vexed to hear you say that.”

But the boy was not attending ; he had dismounted from the window-seat, and was stealing on tip-toe towards Frank’s chair, who was sitting at the table with his back to him. When he got within a yard of him, he telegraphed a signal to Kate ; for, though in the usual way, they quarrelled continually, she was always ready enough to join him in any mischief. Mary and Anna were too intent upon their own lessons to notice what was going on : but both looked up on hearing the sound of a loud laugh from Kate and Robert. The latter had succeeded in snatching Frank’s book away from before him, almost before he was aware of it ; and was flourishing it in triumph over his head. Mary glanced hastily at her brother, fearing the evil temper had got the better of him again : but, no ! Frank was the victor this time. It is true there was a bright flush on his cheek, and

his little hands were firmly clasped together; but that was only a sign that he was trying to keep down the angry words which had almost risen to his lips.

"Rob, give Frank his book back again, please," said Mary, after a minute's pause, crossing over to where Frank was sitting, for not a sound escaped the little boy himself. Her cousins looked at her in surprise, for Mary's face was very pale, and the hand in which she held her own book shook very much.

"Let him get it, if he can," said Robert, laughing, as he jumped upon a chair, to be quite out of Frank's reach.

"Rob," exclaimed Anna, "don't you see you have vexed Mary? give her the book, do."

But, no. Robert was bent on continuing his teasing, and, nothing that his sister could say, could induce him to give up the book.

"Never mind, Frankie," said his sister, bending down, and kissing him, "Remember about patience," she whispered in his ear.

Just then West entered the nursery; and, in a very short time, the prayer-bell rang. All the children jumped up to prepare to go down stairs: Mary put her arm round Frank's shoulder, and they were leaving the room together,

when Rob threw the book down on the table, exclaiming, "There it is ! it wasn't worth making such a fuss about !"

Mary took it, saying, "Thank you, Rob : " but Frankie had never uttered a word, from the time of it being taken from him ; it seemed as if he were afraid to trust himself to speak. It was his first attempt at gaining the victory over a hasty temper, so it is not to be wondered that it was not a very perfect one. But he felt much happier in himself, than if he had given way to angry words ; even though he had a reproof from his uncle for not knowing his lesson, and was kept in the study for half-an-hour longer than Robert, in order to learn it. He had found out that it was very true what Mary had told him, that, if he asked God to help him, He would be sure to do so : but the little boy had found the battle harder than he had imagined it would be. It seems surprising that Robert should have been able to say his lessons,—in truth he did *not* know them very perfectly, but still he managed to get through them with tolerable ease ; for, not only was he a year older than Frank, but he was quicker also, and could learn with far more facility. His cousin's victory over his temper had some effect upon

him, as Mary had told Frank it would have. His conscience smote him, as he went out for his half-hour's play on the lawn before dinner, leaving Frank poring over his lessons; and, though he never asked forgiveness for his unkindness, he abstained from teasing him for the rest of the day.

That afternoon, while the younger ones were busily engaged in their gardens, for it was there that they spent nearly all their leisure time, when the sun was too hot to admit of their taking a walk,—Mary and Anna sat together on the lawn, under the shade of the tulip-tree. The former was very intent on an interesting book which her aunt had lent her, so intent indeed that she never raised her eyes to look about her. She made a pretty picture, as she sat there in her black dress, the sun just glancing on her bent head, and brightening the heavy masses of curls which shaded her pale cheeks. Though there was no absolute beauty to be found in her face—if beauty be measured, as it too often is, by regularity of feature, and brightness of colour—there was on her countenance that, which we think far better than mere prettiness, the calm, peaceful expression, which bore the impress of that

"meek and quiet spirit," which is "of great price," of a gentle, lowly mind, more anxious to please others than itself, a mind dwelling in the shadow of God, and resting on His love. Her companion was at work, knitting a purse for her mamma's birthday, which was close at hand. After a time Anna put down her work, and sat looking at her cousin. Mary seemed attracted by her steady gaze, for presently she looked up.

"What is it, Anna?" she said, smiling.
"What makes you look at me so?"

"I was thinking, May, and wondering about different things, about you," replied Anna.

"What about me, Anna? do tell me;" said Mary, raising her head and listening, as the sound of the children's voices was borne towards them on the wind.

"Why, May, I was wishing I could be like you."

"Don't wish that, dear," said Mary, in a low voice, the quick blush rising to her cheek; for she was really humble, and the sound of praise was distasteful to her, when she felt that she did not deserve it.

"Yes; but I *do*, May; and I will tell you what I mean," persisted Anna. "You know

how Rob teased Frankie this morning ; well, if I had been you, I should have been so cross, I should have said something very sharp, I am sure I should, but you never said a word."

"But I *felt* cross:" said Mary, looking down ; "I could not help it, though it was very wrong."

"Well, but what kept you from *saying* anything?" enquired the other.

"I asked for help, and God gave it me, Anna," was the answer reverently given.

There was a long pause, which was broken by Anna saying, "Mamma has often told me that, Mary ; but somehow or other I never remember it at the time. My temper gets the better of me, and the cross words come before I have time to recollect it ; and I am always sorry afterwards, and I make up my mind that the next time I will do better, but then it happens just the same again."

"But, if we *always* ask God to help us, not only every night and morning when we say our prayers, but whenever we feel inclined to be angry during the day, and, if we go on striving, we *do* get helped, Anna ; because God is sure to give us His Holy Spirit to put better thoughts into our hearts," replied Mary.

"If I could only help saying angry things, I should be so glad," returned her cousin ; "because the *thinking* them is not so wicked."

"Oh, but it is very bad even to *think* them, Anna, dear," said Mary, earnestly. "My own dear Mamma used to tell me, that it said in the Bible, 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer,' which meant the same as having bitter thoughts in our hearts. She used to say that we were breaking the commandment, 'Thou shalt do no murder,' almost as much by having angry thoughts against anyone, as by really taking away their life."

"Oh ! Mary," exclaimed her cousin ; "how dreadful ! I never thought of that before, I really will try not to do so again. If you do not mind, I wish you would tell me something else Aunt Clara used to tell you," she added.

Mary paused a minute ; the quick tears rushed to her eyes at the remembrance of her dead mother, and her voice was choked ; but she continued : "She used to say, Anna, that we were told to be like our Saviour, but that we never could be like Him, while we did not strive to conquer evil passions, and bitter words ; because He was so gentle, and so holy. And, besides, if we wanted to go to live with

Him for ever, we should try beforehand to get ready to go there, for that we could not take angry thoughts to heaven with us ; because it will be all perfect love and peace there."

Anna had been listening attentively, and her earnest look, and moistened eyes, told that her cousin's words had gone home. A kiss was her only answer, for she saw Robert running towards them at full speed, followed by Kate and Frank.

"Ask God to help me, May," she whispered, turning away to hide her tears, as the others approached.

Mary was by this time getting very contented in her new home ; she was really fond of her cousins, particularly of Anna, and she was more happy about Frank, than she had been latterly, since what she had seen that morning. There were plenty of trials for her ; and I do not say, that she did not very often sadly and regretfully look back on the peaceful days at Oaklands, that she did not sorely miss her mother's loving voice and smile, and her father's thoughtful countenance, which used to light up so pleasantly, as he looked at his little daughter. Her pillow was sometimes wet at night, from thinking of these things, and her

heart often very heavy and sad. But May was *content* ; she knew it had been God's will which had taken away her dear parents, and placed her and Frank where they were ; she was very thankful for all the kindness they received, for Mrs. Barton did her best to fill a mother's place to the little orphans,—and she was trying as much as she could to take patiently the teasing, which, though a little thing, is often far more difficult to bear than the heavier trials which meet us in after-life.



CHAPTER IV.

“There’s a wicked spirit
Watching round you still,
And he tries to tempt you
To all harm and ill.

“But ye must not hear him,
Though ’tis hard for you
To resist the evil
And the good to do.”

TIME has been on the wing since we last looked into the Eastham garden ; *then* the fields were yellow with the golden grain, the garden was bright and gay with its lovely flowers, the geraniums with their glowing scarlet, the sweet-smelling roses, whose falling petals told that summer was nearly gone, and the pretty jasmine, with its white star-like blossoms peeping through the green leaves. But *now*, all these are gone ;—the corn is “gathered into the garner,” the trees are leafless, the flowers faded ; and the frost has covered the ground with sparkling crystals.

Since we last saw the children much teasing has fallen to Frank's share ; but that sunny morning in August had seen his first attempt to bear it as a brave boy should do, and he is growing by God's help more gentle, and meek, and brave, more and more like the Holy Saviour whom he so longs to resemble. But Frank's worst trial is yet to come, and we shall see how he bears it.

I said once before that Robert was not naturally an ill-natured boy, but, I can fancy, that some who read this little tale, will think that he must have been, for that otherwise he could not have taken so much pleasure in teasing another, and that other a younger boy than himself, and an orphan. But Robert's real fault was not ill-nature, and by ill-nature I mean delight in the sufferings of another, but extreme selfishness. For, just in the same manner as unselfishness, or love, is the "very bond of peace, and of all virtues," so is selfishness the root and groundwork of most bad qualities. Mr. and Mrs. Barton were very good people ; they sincerely desired to train their children well, and to bring them up in the love and fear of God ; but, in Robert's case, they had made one great mistake,—they rarely denied him

anything. It is true, that when he did wrong, he was corrected, and, if necessary, punished ; but this went for nothing, if every slight whim or wish was on another occasion gratified. In his infancy he had been a very delicate child, and, having lost one boy before, which had caused them intense grief, they were doubly fearful of him.

As years passed on, Robert outgrew this constitutional delicacy, and then his father and mother tried—though he was still greatly indulged—to counteract the bad influence of their early mistake. But it was almost too late : faults which have grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength, cannot be rooted out in a day. It was not, therefore, entirely the boy's own fault that he was selfish ; this failing had been fostered in him from very mistaken love and kindness, and it would be long before it could be eradicated. Nevertheless, though he had teased Frank very much, and sometimes almost more than the little boy could bear—indeed, in his own strength he could not have borne it, but, as we know, Frank, young as he was, and weak as he was, did *not* rest in his own strength, but on the sure help given to him, by Him who loves

those who seek His grace ;—yet, in time, his cousin's gentleness and sweetness of temper had their effect on Robert. He began to get tired, and even ashamed, of his conduct ; and, for the last few weeks, Frank had had a considerable respite.

And what was Mary doing all this time ? Three months nearly have elapsed since we saw her ; and, at the end of them, we find Mary much the same as when we left her ; only, if possible, she is watching over her brother more tenderly, and fulfilling her mother's dying wishes, as regarded him, more faithfully. And Anna ? Well, Anna has never forgotten the conversation that afternoon under the tulip-tree, and she is striving, and advancing too in the right path. There are many difficulties, many stumbling-blocks, aye, and she acknowledges too, with shame, many downfalls in her road, but still she keeps on, the happier the more she strives, and the more she conquers. As to Kate, no softening influence has as yet come to her ; but she is growing very fond of her cousins, particularly of Mary, and will often take their part against Robert's teasing.

I said before, that it was winter at the time of which we are now speaking. All the chil-

dren, especially the two boys, were looking forward with great delight to the probability of the hard frost continuing some days longer, in which case Mr. Barton had promised that they should have some sliding on the pond. Robert and Frank used to go down every morning after lessons to see how thick the ice was getting; and then at dinner they would report accordingly to Mr. Barton. At length they came in one day, all glowing from their quick run in the frosty air, saying that they did "really believe the ice was thick enough. Would Papa," Robert added, "walk down to the pond in the afternoon and see?"

"Readily, my boy," answered his father; and so it was agreed.

This furnished conversation enough for the dinner-table that day. All were in high glee. Robert confided to Frank, who sat next to him, many tales of his prowess last winter; to some of which Mr. Barton was obliged to put a smiling negative, as they fell rather far short of the truth.

"Indeed, *I* know," remarked Kate, "that Rob was really frightened once or twice, and wanted to come off the ice, only I would not let him."

"And I know some one else," interrupted her Mamma, smiling, "who made a very sad face last Christmas Eve, when I told her she might for a treat go on the pond."

All eyes were directed towards Kate, who reddened, as the playful words went home.

"That is too bad, Mamma, dear," she said, as a general laugh was raised at her expense ; "you should not make fun of me."

"Then my little girl should not tell of other people, if she wishes them to be silent about herself," replied her father, smiling.

Dinner ended, Mr. Barton said he would start on his journey of discovery. "Will one of you children run into my study, and fetch me the stick which is in the right-hand corner by the bookcase?" said Mr. Barton, as he stood in the hall putting on his coat, with the children all clustering round him.

Frank and Robert started off at once in search of the desired article. For a minute or two they could not find the stick—it was not in the place named. Frank however discovered it first, and carrying it off in triumph, brought it to his uncle. Mr. Barton had left before Robert joined them ; but his absence had not been noticed by anyone except Frank, for all were too busily engaged talking.

"Now then, children," said Mrs. Barton, coming out from the dining-room door, "go upstairs to the nursery till Papa comes in; and then, if he says the ice is thick enough, you shall put on your things, and we will all go down to the pond, and have some sliding."

She was at once obeyed; and, as they were going upstairs, Robert said to Frank, "I say, Frank, why didn't you tell me you had found Papa's stick?"

"I did call out, 'Oh, here it is, Rob'; didn't you hear me?" returned Frank. "I am very sorry," he added, seeing his cousin looked flushed and angry; "but I am quite sure I thought you heard me say so."

"Well, you needn't make such a fuss about it," was Robert's rather rude answer.

When they reached the nursery there was a great deal of talking about what they should do, and how nice it would be, for "Papa did slide so beautifully," Kate said.

But Robert was unusually silent; and Frank, thinking he was vexed with him about the stick, took no notice, but had a game of romps with little Maude, who dearly loved her "kind cousin Frankie," as she called him. The two were very merry together, playing at hide and

seek, while Robert sat moodily reading a book, with his elbows on the table.

In about half-an-hour's time, Mr. Barton's voice was heard calling up the stairs, "Put on your hats and cloaks, children ; wrap up well, and don't be more than ten minutes getting ready."

There was a general cry of delight, and a rush to the bed-rooms ; and, in less than the time specified, all were ready, and waiting in the hall. In five minutes more Mr. and Mrs. Barton had joined them ; and they were soon on their way to the pond, bounding merrily over the hard, frosty ground. Maude had hold of her Mamma's hand, and was chattering away as fast as her little tongue could go. Robert, too, had quite recovered his spirits ; and nothing seemed wanting to complete their happiness.

The pond reached—what laughing there was to see Papa's vain attempts to keep his balance sometimes ! at Frank's boldness at first, before he attempted to go on the ice, and his terror afterwards when his foot slipped ! What a shout of triumph when Mr. Barton safely made his way across the pond with Maude on his shoulder ! how the little girl clapped her hands, and shouted again in the fulness of her glee.

It was too cold to stay very long ; and Mrs. Barton, being afraid lest any of them should take cold, proposed that they should all have a brisk walk before they returned home. This was a great treat: it was "so seldom," as Anna said, "that they had a walk with Mamma and Papa." There were races to be run, and their gardens to be inspected ; though now, of course, they looked very bare indeed, compared with what they were when we heard of them for the first time.

What a happy afternoon that was ! and how, for months afterwards, the children looked back upon it with pleasure ! how sad that a cloud should so soon fall upon all of them ! But we must not anticipate.

The next day, when dinner was over, Mr. Barton looked very grave, and said that he wished the children to remain a few minutes in the dining-room, instead of going upstairs immediately, as usual. "And now," he continued, appealing to Anna, as being the eldest, "I want you to try and remember which of you went into my study yesterday."

The children all looked at each other, wondering what was going to be said next. Anna thought a minute, and then answered, "Why,

Rob and Frank, Papa, to find your stick, in the afternoon."

"Did you go? and you? or you?" he continued to her first, and then to Kate, and Mary.

Each said they had not been; and then Mr. Barton continued, "The reason I ask is this: there was a letter-weight which always used to be on my writing-table. It was not only expensive, but one which I valued very much; and this morning I found it in its usual place, but broken in half. I have questioned the servants; they tell me that none of them broke it; but Jane, who dusted the room in the morning, says, that when she went to lift it from the table, it came in pieces in her hand. Some one had evidently broken it, and joined it together again, thinking to escape detection. Now this is very wrong: whoever did it had much better have told me at once, and I should not have been at all angry; though, of course, I should have been very sorry that it was broken. Now it lies between you two little boys," continued Mr. Barton, turning to Robert and Frank. "No one but you went in my study! Tell me, which of you did it—Rob, did you?"

There was only a minute's hesitation, and then Robert answered steadily, though his face was very pale, "No, Papa."

"Frank, did you?"

Frank's colour came and went painfully;—it seemed so dreadful to be suspected,—that he answered in a trembling voice, "No, uncle."

"Are you sure, Frank?" said Mr. Barton, repeating his question.

"Yes, uncle, quite sure." But this time the answer came quite clearly and distinctly.

Mary was trembling very much. "Could Frank have done it," she thought, "and been tempted through fear to conceal, and then deny it?" His confused manner had misled even her at first. But one glance at his face, as it was now; one look into his truthful eyes as he turned them towards her, removed the doubt immediately from his sister's mind. Whoever had done it, she felt sure it was not Frank.

Mr. Barton looked very grave. "One of you must have told a story," he said; "and it grieves me very much to think so. Remember I am not angry at the accident—for an accident I daresay it was—but, at the concealment, and the denial." He said this looking at Frank,

for it was evident that his suspicions rested on him. "I have never yet found Robert out in telling a story, or in attempting to deceive me ; and I do not think he would begin to do so now. Rob, is it the truth you have been telling me ?"

"Yes, Papa," said Robert, in a low voice.

"Then, Frank, I am sorry to say, there is nothing left for me to suppose, but that the fault is your's. It grieves me more than I can express to say so ; for it is not a sin against me, but against God. Remember *He* knows the truth, though *I* do not, for He knows the secrets of every heart. As a punishment, you must remain by yourself until you tell me the whole truth. Do not go into the nursery, but into your aunt's dressing-room, and remain there until you feel that you can tell me all ; for I cannot allow you to be with your cousins while you are in disgrace. Remember, I shall be only too glad to forgive you. And now, children, you may go upstairs."

They obeyed, all looking sad and sorry ; and there were tears in Mrs. Barton's kind eyes, when they rested on Frank's little figure, as he left the room. Robert was the first to go : he had been looking out of the window almost the

whole time that his Papa was speaking ; and, on hearing the permission to leave the room, he pushed by the others, and ran upstairs before them.

Looks of consternation passed between the girls, when they were outside the dining-room door ; and Frank glanced wistfully and tearfully into his sister's face, as if to ask whether *she* too doubted him. Mary read his thoughts, and she whispered, as she put her arm round his neck, " Frankie, dear, *I* do not think you did it."

The little boy made no answer ; he only squeezed her hand, for his tears were falling fast and thick. When they reached Mrs. Barton's dressing-room door, Frank tried to draw his sister in after him.

" Do come to me, May ; uncle didn't say you might not," said the little boy, imploringly.

" Uncle did not say that I *might*, darling ; so I must not do it until I have asked. Don't cry, Frankie, I will go down stairs to him in a minute or two ;" and Mary shut the door, and followed her cousins to the nursery. Her heart was very full—full almost to bursting—it seemed so hard that Frank should be punished for what he had not done, and, above all, that he should

be suspected of telling a lie. Rebellious thoughts and words had almost risen to her lips, it was "cruel, unkind." But suddenly a better feeling came over her; a remembrance that God knew the truth, and that, when He saw fit, He would bring it to light—hard though this trial was to bear.

Mary felt as if she could not go to the others till she was calm; and so she went straight to her little bed-room, and there poured out her trouble before her Heavenly Father, asking Him to forgive the wicked thoughts that had been in her heart, to let it be found out that her dear little brother was not guilty, and to help them both to bear the trial. When Mary rose from her knees she was quite calm—though a few minutes before she had been crying bitterly—she had early learnt self-control, far earlier than most children do, for great trouble had fallen to her share; and she had had to restrain her own feelings, first for her mother's sake when her Papa died, and then for Frank's, when their Mamma was taken from them. When she entered the nursery, Anna and Kate were telling all to West, and Mary overheard the latter say, "Well, I don't know, but that colouring up seems as though he were guilty,

to my mind." Mary's own colour mounted to her cheeks at these words ; but she was stronger now, and the angry thought was quickly subdued. The others had not heard her enter ; but when Anna turned and saw her, she went up to her cousin, and, putting her arm round her waist, gave her a fond kiss, saying, "*I do not at all believe Frank did it, May ; don't be unhappy, it will all come right.*"

"If Frank did not do it, who should, I should like to know?" said Robert, in a rough tone, who was on the ground, building with Maude's bricks a tower of impossible height, and very uncertain stability.

"I cannot think what is the matter with you, Rob," returned Kate. "He is so cross, May ; nothing we can say pleases him : does it, Nurse?"

West assented : and Kate did indeed seem to be right, for, giving a hasty kick to his pile of bricks, with a muttered exclamation Robert rose from the floor ; and, taking a book which lay on the table, withdrew to the other end of the room, and soon appeared to be deep in its contents.

But, let us for a minute look back into the dining-room. As the door closed on the chil-

dren, Mrs. Barton turned to her husband, and said, sighing, "I cannot think somehow that Frank broke it; I do not believe he would tell a lie."

"But, my dear Jane, did you not notice his manner when I asked him?" returned her husband; "how he coloured up, and hesitated before he answered? I think those were evident tokens of guilt—No, I do not all agree with you; I fear Frank did it."

"Yes, I know those seem to be conclusive signs," said Mrs. Barton, thoughtfully; "but yet they do not convince me. I know not why, or who did it—Robert is out of the question; he, I am sure, would never tell us a story; it must have been one of the servants, I think,—but I cannot help feeling that Frank's very timidity, though he might be perfectly innocent, would cause that confusion."

"And I feel equally sure, that the timidity of which you speak, led him to conceal the accident, and then deny having done it. And yet it seems strange," continued Mr. Barton, looking thoughtfully into the fire, "If children always inherited their father's qualities, one would think that Frank could not tell a lie; for I do not believe that a more fearless, truth-

ful man ever existed, than my poor brother—and they so well brought up too!” and he relapsed into silence.

Soon after there was a low knock at the door. Mr. Barton rose to see who it was, and there stood Mary. Her uncle led her in, and held her hand kindly, for the girl's face was very pale, her eyes red with crying, and her lips quivered painfully. “What did you want, May, dear?” he asked.

“Please, uncle,” was the low reply, “you said Frank was to go into the dressing-room, but you did not say whether I might be with him. He wanted me to go; but I would not, until I had asked you.”

Mr. Barton looked at his wife enquiringly; “Yes, let her go,” said the latter, in a pitying tone; “it seems hard to keep her away from him.”

“Well then, Mary, you may,” said her uncle. “Perhaps you may be able to persuade Frank to confess his fault, you must try your best.”

“Uncle, he has never told a story, *I know* he has not,” said May, with momentary energy, the bright red flushing into her cheeks.

Mr. Barton shook his head. “I am sorry I cannot think so, May, dear,” he replied; “but

I hope you may be right. And you must remember," he added, kissing her, as she was preparing to leave the room, "*you* are not to blame; it is no fault of your's, therefore you must not make yourself unhappy."

Poor child! it was easy enough to tell her not to be unhappy, when her young heart was bursting with suppressed grief!



CHAPTER V.

"You cannot see the Holy God,
Nor that bad spirit tempting you;
But you can watch, and never speak
A word that is not true.

"For Christ who looks into our hearts,
Sees all we think, hears all we say,
Will surely help us to be good,
If we but watch and pray."

On leaving the dining-room Mary ran upstairs, and, in another minute, she was with her brother. The little boy had thrown himself on the ground, and was sobbing as if his heart would break. May sat down beside him, and putting his head on her lap, tried to soothe his wild sobs; but it was some minutes before he was calm enough to listen to what she had to say.

"I did not do it, May; indeed I did not. I never told a story," cried poor Frank, as he clung to her.

"No, darling," replied his sister, fondly.

"I feel sure you did not. I think you would not say what is not true, because you know that we have been always told how wrong it is. But, Frankie, how cold you are! Come to the fire and warm yourself," said Mary, trying to rise from her seat on the ground; but Frank held her with a firm grasp.

"You are not going to leave me, sister, are you? It is so dreadful to be here all alone."

"No, dear; I am not going away," replied Mary; "Uncle said I might stay with you all the afternoon; so come and sit down close by me."

Minutes passed away, and the children still sat together silently looking into the red blaze. "Frank, dear," said Mary, at last, "you are *sure* you did not tell a story downstairs?"

"Sister, indeed I would not," replied the boy, earnestly; "I know what dear Mamma used to tell me about truth, and how displeased God was if we told a lie,"—and the tears flowed afresh.

"Then, if *you* did not do it, Frankie, do you know who did?" asked Mary, presently.

"No, sister. Rob and I went into the room, and I found the stick first, and took it to uncle. I never looked at anything, or touched anything,



"THE TEARS FLOWED AFRESH."

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in the room. Oh! May, it is so very hard to punish me for what I have not done," exclaimed the little boy.

"Yes, Frankie," said his sister, through her own tears, "it seems hard—very hard; but God would not let it happen if He did not think it was good for us. It is very dreadful to be suspected of telling a lie. As I was going upstairs after dinner, when I had left you here, such wicked thoughts came into my heart, and I felt so angry; but then I remembered how the Lord Jesus suffered much worse things for us: so we must think of that, and not about it being hard."

Frank's eyes were fixed on her, and he was eagerly listening to every word. "Sister, I did remember that while you were away," he answered; "but then, I thought, what would dear Mamma say, if she could see me now, if she could know that they said I had told a lie? She wouldn't believe it, do you think?"

"No, Frankie; I think dear Mamma would trust you; but, I know she would say, that you ought to be patient."

Frank's head was bent down, and his lips were moving. May did not know, but, if she could have heard what he was saying, it would

have been these words, "Lord Jesus, help me to be patient, as you were patient."

"Sister, God can see that I am telling the truth ; He knows I have not done it, does He not?" asked Frank, raising his head, in a minute or two.

"Yes, darling, God knows everything," replied Mary. "He can see into our hearts when nobody else can ; and He will be sure to let the truth come out some day."

The children sat on, sometimes talking thus, and sometimes silent, into the dim twilight, till the room was quite dark around them, and the only light they had was the flickering of the red blaze.

At tea-time Mrs. Barton came to fetch Mary downstairs. She spoke to Frankie kindly, and asked again whether he had told the truth, and this time he was able to tell her quite firmly and clearly that he had. Mrs. Barton seemed strengthened, rather than otherwise, in her conviction that he was innocent, for, after tea—Frank's being sent up to him in the dressing-room—she asked her husband, if he would not to-morrow remit his sentence, and allow the little boy to join his cousins.

But Mr. Barton was inflexible. He was a

very decided man, and, when he said a thing, he never altered, unless he saw good cause for doing so ; and now, so sure was he that Frankie had told a story, and that his wife was mistaken in her idea of his innocence, that nothing she could say could shake his determination. He had a horror of a lie, and he wished to make this such an example, as, by so doing, to prevent a recurrence of the same.

The children were all much sobered ; there were no merry spirits, as there had been yesterday, at the tea-table ; the conversation flagged ; no one seemed inclined to talk. Mary went up to the dressing-room, by her aunt's permission, as soon as " grace " was said : and there she found that Frank's meal was untasted.

" I cannot eat it, May," he said, in answer to her remonstrance ; " my head aches so, do you think I may go to bed ? "

To this ready permission was given, on his sister asking, and Frank was soon undressed, and laid in his little bed. He shed some tears as he said his prayers, for he had never felt so unhappy before in his short life. Mary, in spite of the cold, sat with him, till sleep soon closed his weary, aching eyelids. When she returned to the nursery, she had no heart to

join in her cousin's games, or conversation. Anna was very kind : she seemed to feel much for her ; and soon came and sat by her side, apart from the others. It was very quiet sympathy, for Anna *said* but little ; her own heart told her it was better not to do so ; that silence was the truest kindness. But this Mary valued very much,—she never forgot it ; but, years afterwards, when they were both quite grown up, she would speak gratefully of her cousin's kindness, as a gleam of sunshine across that most unhappy day. Everyone, even the youngest child who is at an age to understand, has the power of soothing another in trouble ; and, it is a quality which all should learn to cultivate, as one which will win much love and gratitude. Words are often not needed ; indeed, as a rule, they are better left alone, but a look, a tone, a loving glance, or a little tender attention, go far to heal a wounded heart, and to bind up a bleeding spirit.

But to return. The hours seemed very long till nine o'clock ; Mary thought they would never end, and she longed for the night, when she should be quite alone.

The next morning she had not time to go into Frank's room before breakfast : she had

her lessons to learn, and she did not wish to displease her aunt by knowing them but imperfectly. On the breakfast-table she found a letter from her old nurse, Spencer ; this she hailed with delight, for Mary, like most girls of her age, was always very pleased to receive a letter. As soon, therefore, as breakfast was over, having a quarter-of-an-hour to spare before her studies should begin, she ran upstairs to read it to Frankie. She found the little boy in his room, standing with his back towards her, wearily looking out of the window.

"Frankie, dear!" she said, "How are you?" As he turned round, with a glad cry, hearing the door open, and seeing who it was—

"My head-ache is not gone yet, May ; my head feels so funny too, as if the room were going round," and he pressed his little hand on his forehead.

"Don't you feel well, Frankie?" said his sister, rather frightened, for she noticed that the child's face looked flushed, and his hand, as he touched her's, was very hot,—“Don't you feel well, darling?” she repeated.

"Only tired, sister," said he, laying his head on her shoulder. "I should like to go to bed again, if I might."

“Look, Frankie!” exclaimed May,—who inwardly resolved, that on going downstairs, she would get her aunt to go up and see Frank—“Look, what I found on the breakfast-table! a letter from dear old Nursie! I haven’t read it yet; but I shall have time before lessons.”

It was full of fond expressions, and hopes that her darlings were quite well, and happy in their new home. She often thought of them, she said, and wished she were with them again; for, the little children with whom she was, were not as good, or as obedient, as they used to be. And she bade them try always to be good, and never forget that the great God was ever watching over them.

“Poor Nursie!” said Frank, with a weary sigh, as Mary folded up the letter, “she doesn’t think I am being punished, May. Does uncle still think I did it, sister?”

“He hasn’t said anything to me this morning, darling.”

“May, cousin Rob has been so funny; he wouldn’t speak to me at all. As we slept together, I didn’t think uncle would mind my speaking to him; but he wouldn’t answer me. I suppose I did wrong: do you think I did?”

"No, Frankie," replied his sister; "I do not think Uncle Edward would in the least mind your speaking to Rob. But I must not stay any longer now. When are you going down to the dressing-room?"

"West said she would come and tell me when I was to go," answered the little boy. But his sister's time was up, and she could only give him a fond kiss, and run downstairs.

She soon found her aunt, and told her that she did not think Frankie was well, for he complained of his head aching, and his hands were very hot.

Mrs. Barton immediately went to her little nephew, and found him, just as his sister had said, very feverish; and, moreover, she learnt from West, that his breakfast had been scarcely tasted. He told her he was very tired, and should like to go to bed again; and so she had him undressed—waiting with him meanwhile—and, when he was comfortably settled, she stood looking at him for a moment or two; he reminded her so forcibly of his mother, as he lay there, with his blue eyes looking unnaturally large and bright, and with the pink fever-flush on his cheek.

“Auntie, I never told the lie ; indeed I didn’t !” said the little boy, eagerly. “I can’t think to tell you, my head feels so funny, but you will believe me, won’t you ?”

Mrs. Barton’s heart warmed towards the little motherless child, and she only replied by a kiss on his forehead, and an earnest “Frank, dear, if you told the truth, God is sure to let it be seen ;—but now you must lie still, and try to go to sleep.”

Leaving West to sit with him, Mrs. Barton left the room. She went at once to her husband’s study,—where he sat, hearing Rob his lessons—and told him how very unwell Frank seemed, and that she thought it would be better to send for the doctor, if he did not appear better by dinner-time. Robert gave a hasty start, as he heard this, and visibly changed colour ; but his Papa and Mamma were too intent on what they were saying, to notice it. On reaching her sitting-room, she found the girls all ready with their lessons, and apparently wondering very much what had detained her so long. She told them that Frank seemed poorly, and said his head ached, so she had had him put to bed again. Kate and Anna exchanged pitying looks with each other, as Mary, in a trembling

tone, asked, "You do not think he is going to be ill, do you, Auntie?"

"I cannot say as yet, dear," answered Mrs. Barton; "I hope not; but I have told your uncle, that if he is not better by dinner-time, we will send for Dr. Marsh."

Poor Mary's lessons did not get on very well that morning; her thoughts were all with her brother. If she might but be with him, she thought; but she was a sensible girl, so she tried to collect her thoughts, and to be as patient as possible. After lessons, she followed her aunt upstairs, and there they found Frank no better than three hours ago, if anything rather worse; so the letter to the doctor was written and dispatched.

It was a weary waiting time to one of the little group, until he arrived; for Mary, though younger in years, had known sickness and death, and now her fears exaggerated the real state of the case. Dr. Marsh, when he came, said that Frank was ill, though not as yet seriously; he would need great care and quiet, and close watching: it was a feverish attack, brought on doubtless by cold; and subsequent excitement acting on the pre-disposition had produced this effect. As it was nothing infec-

tious, Mary was allowed to be with her brother ; and nothing was, of course, said to him on the subject of yesterday. Mr. Barton's heart smote him, as he looked on the little form, tossing restlessly to and fro ; and he wondered if he had, after all, been unjust or harsh towards him.

In the night a change came on. Frank became worse ; and, when his aunt went to his bedside the next morning, and spoke to him by name, he did not know her. This was sad news to carry to Mary : but, though very unhappy, and anxious, the child did not give way ; she knew that her dear little brother was in God's hands, and that He would let him live, if it were His will. When Dr. Marsh paid his visit that day, he shook his head, and spoke very differently from what he had done on the preceding one. Frankie was in great danger ; the fever, he said, had taken a turn for the worse, and he would not answer for his recovery. The kind doctor pitied the little, wan-looking girl, who waited so anxiously outside the nursery door to see him, as he passed on his way downstairs. "Poor child !" he said, patting her cheek ; "Do not make yourself unhappy ; your brother will do yet ;

and, if we take great care, we shall, I hope, soon see him running about as merrily as ever." But Dr. Marsh's heart belied his own words ; he was far from feeling the certainty with which he spoke. Mary was not told the extent of the danger ; but her cousins were, in order to make them kinder, and more considerate, towards her. Their Mamma's disclosure, which, when they were in the nursery alone, she went to make to them with the tears in her eyes, made them very unhappy. " Poor Frankie ! Poor May ! " exclaimed Kate and Anna together, " Oh, Mamma, I am so sorry for her." But, the effect upon Robert was startling in the extreme. He turned very pale, and, in a trembling voice, hiding his face in his mother's lap, said, " Oh ! Mamma ! Frankie won't die, will he ? Tell me he won't die ! "

" I cannot tell you that, my boy," said his mother, soothingly, thinking it was Robert's sorrow for his past teasing which distressed him so much now. " I cannot tell you that : I wish I could : for it would indeed be very, very sad, to think of yesterday, and of poor Frank having told a story. And, if anything should happen to him, it would make you very sorry to remember having teased him sometimes."

"Sometimes"! Rob did not speak—he only hid his face the closer—for his conscience smote him. His mother, he knew well, did not know *how often* he had teased his cousin,—neither Mary, nor Frank, had ever complained of him ; and this made it doubly bitter to bear now.

When Mrs. Barton left the nursery, she went straight to her little nephew's room ; and there it was piteous to see the pale young watcher, who could scarcely be induced to leave her brother, sitting with West by the bedside, and to listen to poor Frank's unconscious moanings—

"Uncle, Auntie, I didn't tell a lie ! Mamma, dear, did I ? *You* know ! Don't let them think I did ! I don't know who broke it, but I am sure *I* did not."

Telling Mary to go and sit down quietly in her dressing-room, or else she would be ill too—which Mary instantly, although in her heart, unwillingly obeyed—Mrs. Barton sat down to watch herself by the sick bed.

But to return to the nursery. Robert would not be comforted ; he could not play ; he could not read ; he only moved restlessly about the room, sometimes leaning, pressing his head

with a listless air against the window-panes, as if his thoughts were far away. The other children were very silent and tearful: unlike Mary, they had never known dangerous illness in the house before, and now it seemed as if the shadow of a great dread were about them. Little Maude even,—when she asked why “Cousin Frankie did not come and play” with her, and was told that it was because he was very ill,—cried, and said she did “love him so, she hoped he would not die, and go quite away from her.” When his Papa spoke kindly to Robert, on seeing his evident distress, the boy’s only answer was to hide his face in his hands, as if he could not bear his father’s gaze.

“I never knew Rob was so fond of Frankie before,” remarked Kate afterwards to Anna; “he seems now to care more than any of us.”

The reports from the sick-room were still unfavourable; and when Dr. Marsh paid another visit towards evening, he said that night would, in all human probability, decide it, the child might survive,—the issue was in God’s hands alone—but he could not but acknowledge that poor Frankie’s life hung, so to speak, on a thread. Mrs. Barton did not think it right

to keep this entirely from Mary, for should the morning's light bring what they feared, it would be a greater shock to her than if she were unprepared. But May was not as unprepared as her aunt imagined. During the silent hours of anxiety through which she had passed that day, she had thought of the possibility of Frank being taken from her, and she had been praying to God if it pleased Him, with whom she knew all things were possible, to spare her dear brother's life. And so May gave way to no wild excess of grief, but only clung to Mrs. Barton, as she whispered, "I have been asking God, Auntie, to make Frankie well again, and I think He will : but if not, he will go to heaven, and be where Mamma is : I am sure he never told that story."

That evening, after tea, Mr. Barton was sitting alone in his study, reading apparently, for he held a book open before him, but, if you had looked closer, you would have seen that his eyes were not fixed on it, but on the fire, which was burning and crackling in the grate. His thoughts were with his little nephew ; he was asking himself, had he condemned him unjustly ? The child's delirious words, pleading so forcibly his innocence, would recur to his mind ; and he

could not now think him guilty. But, *who* had done it? The thought perplexed him. Suspicion certainly had rested on Frankie, from his confused and hesitating manner on being first questioned: every one else had given a distinct answer. Just as he reached this point in his meditations, the door opened, and a voice said, "May I come in, Papa?"

It was Robert.

"Yes, my boy; what do you want? How is Frank?" asked Mr. Barton, wonderingly, for it was an unusual hour for any of the children to come to his study. There was no answer, and Robert still stood at the door.

"What do you want, my boy? Come and speak to me," repeated Mr. Barton.

Then Robert came forward, and stood firm, within a few paces of his father's chair,—
"Papa," he said, distinctly, though his words were low, and his face very pale, "Frank did not break the letter-weight; *I* did."

Mr. Barton was so astonished, that at first he could not speak, and Robert, interpreting his silence to anger, continued, in an agitated voice, "I am very sorry, Papa, indeed I am!"

"*You* did it, Robert," said Mr. Barton, in a tone of deep sorrow, as if not hearing the last

sentence, "*You* did it, and then denied it, and let Frank suffer! I am grieved; I thought better things of you!"

"Oh, Papa, Papa! I know it was very wrong, very wicked," sobbed the poor boy; "but I was afraid at first, and then I seemed as if I *couldn't* tell. Do forgive me, Papa!"

"You must ask God to forgive you, Robert," answered his father, in a softened voice; for the child's penitence, and also the effort it had cost him to confess his fault, were only too evident. "You have offended Him, not me; and His displeasure against liars is so very great."

"But, Papa; oh! do tell me that *you* forgive me," urged Robert, pleadingly.

"*I* forgive you, my child," said his father, in a sorrowful tone, putting his hand on the boy's shoulder, "*I* forgive you: but let us kneel down, and ask the pardon of Him, whose eye has been on you all the time." And, drawing Robert down beside him, Mr. Barton, in a few earnest words, implored forgiveness for him, from the God who is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," but who, while He hates the sin, loves the sinner. When they rose from their knees, Mr. Barton tried to lead the child

to see the deep sinfulness of his conduct towards his Heavenly Father; he was fearful of his looking upon it only as a sin towards man. And then he touched upon what might be the issue of it, only slightly though, for Robert burst into such a wild passion of tears, as to make him for some moments quite incapable of listening to what his father was saying.

"Papa, do you think God will ever forgive me; it was so wicked?" he asked, presently.

"My boy, God has promised to forgive all who are really sorry for their sins, and He will forgive you, if you ask Him. But you must be very watchful over yourself for the future, very earnest in praying for grace to keep you from falling again into the same sin."

"And Frank, Papa—do you think Frank will ever forgive me for having let him be punished?"

"My child, if it pleases God to spare his life, I feel sure Frankie will," was the sad answer; and, in his heart, Mr. Barton breathed the earnest prayer, that the child's life might be spared, so that his own boy might not have the fearful remembrance to carry with him through life.

"And now, Rob," said his father, after a

pause, "you must come upstairs with me, and tell the truth before your sisters."

Robert knew that this was a just punishment: but it was very hard to do. Nevertheless, he was so truly sorry for his fault, and the day's anxiety had so completely subdued him, that he made no murmur or complaint.

When the confession was over, and he was kissing his father, and saying Good night, Robert whispered, "Papa, I am ready to be punished; I shall not mind that."

"My boy," was the answer, "you have had punishment sufficient, I think, in this day's anxiety; and God alone knows, whether a greater may not be in store for you."

The child knew what his father meant, and he hid his face, and sobbed.

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But Frank did not die! The earnest prayers of that household were heard, and his life was spared. We shall not dwell on his ready forgiveness of his cousin, when he was well enough to be told of the confession Robert had made; on the penitence of the latter; on the mother's sorrow, on hearing of her child's grievous fault;

or on Mary's joy and thankfulness at her brother's restoration. For some time Frank was very weak and ill, but eventually, by the blessing of God, he was quite restored to health ; and, by that time, Robert had learnt a lesson which he would never forget. He was never known to tell a lie again. He was Frank's most tender nurse during the whole of his convalescence ; and there was no one whom the little invalid liked to have with him so well, besides his own sister, as "cousin Rob."

We cannot now follow them any farther ; but, so far, we see how Mary and Frank had found truly, that though God had taken away their earthly parents, He was still a "Father to the fatherless" ; and that His watchful, loving care was over them always. For though at times there might still be heard quarrelsome tones, and peevish words ; and angry frowns might still be seen on some faces ; yet the children were all more united ; they were gradually learning to "bear and forbear," to make allowance for each other's failings, to give up to and love one another. And, were we able to follow the orphans through life, we should see how, though their mother had been so early removed from them by the hand of

death, her influence, her prayers, and her teaching still remained, and were so lovingly remembered, that the God in whom she had trusted, mercifully used them in His own wise providence, as a means of leading her children in the narrow way of eternal life.



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